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SUBJECT: GEORGIA/RUSSIA/OSCE: RUSSIA STONEWALLS AT VIENNA
DOCUMENT CONFRONTATION WITH GEORGIA

REF: A. USOSCE DAILY REPORTS MAY 30 - JUNE 4
[1](#)B. 2008

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: To address tensions between Georgia and Russia, the Finnish CiO convened three back-to-back meetings in Vienna on June 4 at the request of both Georgia and Russia. This was the first ever invocation of the Vienna Document 1999(VD99) Chapter III Risk Reduction mechanism. In a style designed to win over the Europeans present, Georgia's Deputy Minister of Interior calmly and succinctly pressed Georgia's case and promised no more UAV flights if Russia would withdraw the troops and heavy armaments recently introduced into Abkhazia.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Completely isolated, Russia's OSCE Chief Arms Control Delegate stonewalled and refused to budge from Moscow's denial of involvement in the April 20 UAV shoot down over Abkhazia, despite the findings in the recent UNOMIG report. The Georgian and Russian delegations will now decide whether either side wishes to call for a joint PC/FSC meeting. This could happen as early as next week, and Georgia hopes US military experts who reviewed the data could attend and be prepared to verify their findings. Vienna delegations meanwhile are looking to the expected meeting in St. Petersburg between Presidents Saakashvili and Medvedev to break the deadlock. End Summary.

RUSSIA STILL IN DENIAL OVER UAV INCIDENT

[1](#)3. (SBU) The meeting, actually three meetings back to back, was called by the Finnish Ambassador Antti Turunen, representing the OSCE CiO, in response to Georgian and Russian requests under VD99 Chapter III, Risk Reduction (refs). Ekaterine Zguladze, Deputy Minister of Interior of Georgia, presented Georgia's offer for dialogue and negotiation in an elegant, succinct style that was meant to appeal to the numerous Ambassadors from European countries. Lamenting that Russia showed its disrespect by sending no one from Moscow, she gave no quarter, deflecting Russian attempts to hide behind procedure or excuses, such as "we did not receive original videos or radar records."

[1](#)4. (SBU) Zguladze pointed out that Georgia had given Russia this data on April 23 in New York, and she demanded that Russia hand over its own radar data, "the only original documentation still withheld from investigators." She said Georgia had received the UNOMIG report and, unlike Russia,

had taken it seriously. Georgia had suspended UAV flights and these would remain suspended, she announced, as long as Russia removed the new troops and heavy armaments introduced recently into the Abkhazia region of Georgia.

¶5. (SBU) Even with this concession, Russian Arms Chief Arms Control Delegate Ulyanov refused to rise to the occasion, offering neither new explanations nor new accusations of Georgian misdeeds. He conceded nothing but Russia's continuing condemnation of Georgia's alleged provocative stance.

NUMEROUS INTERVENTIONS SUPPORT GEORGIAN TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

¶6. (SBU) In private consultations prior to the meetings with other delegations, USOSCE had urged them to intervene as an indication that we were taking Georgia's complaints seriously and understood their point of view. Many responded, with the UK, France, Germany, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Spain, Greece, Slovenia, Sweden, Canada and Turkey taking the floor. All noted the objectivity and clarity of the UNOMIG report -- their way of agreeing that Russia had some explaining to do. All reiterated support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. No delegation took the floor to support the Russian version of events.

¶7. (SBU) The Turkish Ambassador agreed with the Finnish Chair, who had said that his government hoped the meeting in Vienna would help create the right climate for a productive

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meeting between Presidents Saakashvili and Medvedev scheduled for June 7. Turkey also put in a dig at Russia over its "suspension" of CFE implementation. In addition to using prepared points received from Washington, U.S. Ambassador Finley questioned why Russia had not turned over its own radar data as had been requested and cast a jaundiced eye on Russian excuses for not engaging forthrightly over the UAV shoot down.

RUSSIAN INVOCATION OF VD99 AGAINST GEORGIA

¶8. (SBU) Regarding Russia's own invocation of VD99 mechanisms, Ulyanov almost exclusively stuck to the script of the two Russian letters that invoked the mechanism (refs). In reply, Zguladze asserted that Georgia had done nothing of "unusual military significance" in the Upper Kodori Valley or anywhere else in Abkhazia. She said it was not correct to use VD99 to try to enforce the Moscow Agreement, conceding it was a document that everyone was having trouble implementing properly. One could only conclude, she said, that Russia intended to use VD99 mechanisms to stall, confuse the international community and waste everyone's time. Nevertheless, she said Georgia would answer the charges and went on to reject categorically Russia's allegations.

NEXT STEPS IN VIENNA

¶9. (SBU) According to the VD-99 mechanism, the CiO is now on the hook to produce a report of the meeting. Georgia and Russia said they would consult on whether they would take the next step in the process by calling for a joint PC/FSC meeting in Vienna. Either or both may ask for such a meeting. If that happens, the request starts a 48 hour clock. It is not expected that the meeting would take place before the middle of next week.

¶10. (SBU) We understand from Embassy Tbilisi that Georgia's Deputy FonMin has asked for the U.S. military experts who traveled to Georgia to examine radar/video data be made available to appear at the OSCE soon, presumably at the abovementioned joint PC/FSC meeting in Vienna to verify their

findings. If there is a meeting at which military experts are invited, U.S. Mission would recommend the U.S. military experts attend the meeting and be prepared to participate.

FINLEY